

Remarks/Arguments

Claim Status:

Claims 1-16 are pending in the present case. The features of amended claim 8 have been included in amended claims 1 and 10. Claims 17 and 18 have now been cancelled. Claims 8 and 9 have been objected to and are indicated as allowable if written in independent form. Applicants appreciate Examiners recognition of allowable subject matter.

Section §102 Rejections:

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Braccio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,905,938). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of these claims and respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Braccio et al. for the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the features of originally filed claim 8. No new matter has been added. Independent claim 1, as amended, recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Braccio et al., namely:

A reusable self-aligning precision latch, comprising:

d) a flexured ball assembly having a ball and a floating clamp plate in contact with the ball, said floating clamp plate maintained perpendicularly to an axis of the flexured ball assembly by a compliant member, said flexured ball assembly clamped by the plurality of linkage assemblies to the latch body with the floating clamp plate such that all clamping forces between the floating clamp plate and the latch body are equalized.

Basis for amended claim 1 may be seen, for example, in FIG. 4 and FIG. 8. As illustrated in FIG. 4, a self-aligning precision latch 14 is in preparation to capture a flexured ball assembly 12. As illustrated in FIG. 8, a flexured ball assembly 12 having a ball 32 and a floating clamp plate 30 in contact with the ball 32, and further comprising a floating clamp plate 30 maintained perpendicularly to an axis of the flexured ball assembly 12 by a compliant member 90 is shown.

Braccio et al. discloses a male member 12 including a head 16 in the general form of a cone having a side defined by a surface 18 (Column 3, line 57-60). Braccio et al. neither

disclose nor suggest a reusable self-aligning precision latch comprising a flexured ball assembly having a ball and a floating clamp plate in contact with the ball, and further comprising a floating clamp plate maintained perpendicularly to an axis of the flexured ball assembly by a compliant member. Braccio et al. therefore fail to disclose or suggest every element of Applicants' claimed invention.

Accordingly, for the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1, as amended, is patentable over Braccio et al. and should be allowed. Claims 2-7 are dependent upon claim 1, and therefore should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim. Reconsideration of claims 1-7 is respectfully requested.

Objected claim 8 has been modified in view of the amendments to independent claim 1, from which it depends. No new matter has been added. Objected claim 8 should be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim. Objected claim 9 is dependent upon claim 1, and therefore should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim.

Claims 10-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Braccio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,905,938). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of these claims and respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Braccio et al. for the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 10 has been amended to include the features of originally filed claim 8. No new matter has been added. Independent claim 10, as amended, recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Braccio et al., namely:

A method for latching, employing a kinematic, self-aligning precision latch, comprising the steps of:

c) making contact with the clamp plate with a follower link in a manner as to equalize forces on the clamp plate wherein the **clamp plate is in contact with a ball and maintained pivotably perpendicular to an axis of the flexured ball assembly by a compliant member.**

Basis for amended claim 10 may be seen, for example, in FIG. 4 and FIG. 8. As illustrated in FIG. 4, a self-aligning precision latch 14 is in preparation to capture a flexured ball assembly 12. As illustrated in FIG. 8, the clamp plate 30 is in contact with a ball 32 and maintained pivotably perpendicular to an axis of the flexured ball assembly 12 by a compliant member 90.

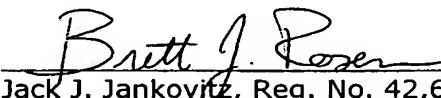
Braccio et al. neither disclose nor suggest a method for latching, employing a kinematic, self-aligning precision latch, comprising the step of making contact with the clamp plate with a follower link in a manner as to equalize forces on the clamp plate wherein the clamp plate is in contact with a ball and maintained pivotably perpendicular to an axis of the flexured ball assembly by a compliant member. Braccio et al. therefore fail to disclose or suggest every element of Applicants' claimed invention.

Accordingly, for the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 10, as amended, is patentable over Braccio et al. and should be allowed. Claims 11-16 are dependent upon claim 10, and therefore should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim. Reconsideration of claims 10-16 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments in the claims and the remarks set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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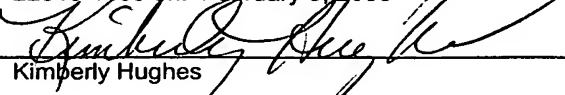
Dated: February 8, 2005

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